

LAMERLE
+ GROVER
GAYNELLE
PEACHES
JIMMIE WY - p 20-23

GAYNELLE. Preachin' to the choir, Cousin. *(Retrieves the can.)*

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Okay, y'all listen, 'cause this is big! I've got some news that's gonna make us *all* feel better. You're just gonna fall out. I —

PEACHES. Then *tell* us. Spill it!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. I'm tryin'! See, with all the lap band surgeries and weight loss clubs and women worryin' about their hearts and all that foolishness, there's a dwindlin' number of your plus-sized brides headed down the aisle. Truth is, we've married off most of the heftier gals in this part of Texas. So I've been workin' the books, tryin' to keep our doors open but, honestly, Wide Bride's runnin' on fumes.

GAYNELLE. Wait! We knew the bookings had fallen off, but we had no idea it had gotten *this* bad! Why did you keep it from us?!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Because y'all invested everything you had to make a success of this business. You trusted me and I'll be danged if I let you down! That's why I'm so excited that the plan I put into motion is working out. See, this morning I — *(Sheriff Grover Lout, beleaguered good ol' boy in full uniform, barrels through the stage right door.)*

GROVER. *(Incredulous.)* Jimmie Wy, I clocked you goin' sixty miles per hour in a twenty mile zone. *And* you blew through every single stop sign!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Not now, Grover! I'm tryin' to tell my cousins a very important story and —

GROVER. And *I'm* tryin' to say you've become Sweetgum's number one menace to public safety! How did you not hear my siren?!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Can you back off this siren and stop sign fixation? *(To the others.)* Anyway, this morning, I —

GROVER. So you can't quit speedin' and you can't quit talkin'. Well, looka here! *(Pulls out a pencil.)* I can't quit writin' you up a big, fat ticket! *(Frustrated, Jimmie Wyvette grabs the yardstick off the work-table and brandishes it.)*

JIMMIE WYVETTE. I am gonna tell this story — or else!

GROVER. You do realize I've got a gun, right?

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Yeah, but everyone in town knows what a lousy shot you are, Grover Lout. On the other hand, *(Slaps the yardstick loudly against the work-table.)* I know how to make a yardstick *sing*!

GROVER. *(Steps back.)* Uh ... proceed.

JIMMIE WYVETTE. That's more like it. *(To her cousins.)* Now, I figured the only way to save our business was to diversify. That's

why I agreed to do the reunion, so we could impress folks with our party-planning talents. Well, something just now happened that has ratcheted up our possibilities big time! And it is nothing but fate, man! I'm telling you, F-A-I-T!

PEACHES. Could you just cut to the chase?

GAYNELLE. Yeah, you're really beatin' this story to death.

GROVER. *And you spelled "fate" wrong.*

JIMMIE WYVETTE. No one in Texas gives a cat hair about spellin', okay?! Anyway, the Reunion Committee just told me they're giving the Distinguished Alumni Award to none other than Ms. Tanzie Lockhart.

GAYNELLE. Makes perfect sense. Tanzie's done everything — *and everybody* — on capitol hill in Austin.

PEACHES. Yep, ol' Tanzie's clawed her way up to the bottom of the middle and is now the assistant to the governor.

JIMMIE WYVETTE. (*Annoyed, brandishing the yardstick.*) Who's telling this story?! Tanzie — *the woman who's organizing the governor's sixtieth birthday bash* — will be here Friday night. Get it?! If she likes what she sees, the governor's birthday-palooza could be *ours*! Girls, we get Tanzie to hire us, we'll make the leap from big-gal weddings to being the hottest new *party* planners in the Lone Star State!

PEACHES. You are a genius! But let's kick in some more from the account for the party and put the cherry on the puddin'. We'll blow Tanzie away!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. I knew you'd love the idea! But here's the deal — with everything we've already put into this reunion, our account is ... uh ... right at zero. (*Grover lets out a low whistle.*)

GAYNELLE. Hold on! You're saying everything we've got is riding on this party and if the plan *doesn't* work, the three of us will be living under the overpass in a refrigerator box?

JIMMIE WYVETTE. No! It's not that bad. I mean, surely we could each have our *own* box.

GAYNELLE. (*Grabs the yardstick and gives it to Peaches.*) Whack me in the head! Knock me out! I can't hear any more!

JIMMIE WYVETTE. Girls, I'm not gonna sugar-coat it. It's the last inning, our final at-bat, and since we've got nothing left to lose, I say let's swing for the fences. If we hit a home run, we save our business and our dream of working together. Then nobody can say bad news is the only thing that walks through our door. (*LaMerle enters from the stage right door, dressed in black.*)

LAMERLE. Why am I not surprised you're all just standing around, jaw-jacking with the do-nothing sheriff?

PEACHES. Well, *that* didn't last long. *(LaMerle spies Gaynelle.)*

LAMERLE. Ah, there's the widow in red, pride of the Verdeens, whose idea of a proper send-off for her husband was dirty dancing on his casket.

GAYNELLE. Grover, can I borrow your gun a minute? I'll give it right back ... minus a bullet or two. *(Reaches for the gun.)*

GROVER. *(Stops her.)* I think we'd all be safer if I handle the firearms.

LAMERLE. Well, *I* think we'd all be safer if you were out on the street, doing your job. Four days ago, Aubrey pulled a stunt that cost me my deaconship and I haven't seen the old goat since. Now you go find him, make sure he's safe ... so I can wring that man's scrawny neck!

GROVER. Has it crossed your mind he might be hiding from *you*?

LAMERLE. Tough! I just found out from the Reunion Committee there's going to be a photo-op of all surviving Guacamole Queens and their homecoming escorts. Aubrey was mine! It'll take from now 'til then to make him presentable.

GAYNELLE. Wait, nobody told me! I was a Guacamole Queen, too.

LAMERLE. In light of your recent shameless behavior, they were probably afraid you'd show up ready to do a pole dance.

PEACHES. Just so you know, Aunt LaMerle, if there is a photo of all the Guacamole Queens, Gaynelle *will* be in it.

LAMERLE. Then she better keep her distance. I don't want to be frozen in time with the Madwoman of Sweetgum anywhere near me. Okay, Grover, hit the bricks, find Aubrey, and let me see my tax dollars at work *for once!* *(She and Grover exit the stage right door.)*

GAYNELLE. Oh, I am *definitely* wearing tap shoes to *her* funeral! But right now, I'm going to go warn Aubrey and tell him to lay low. *(Takes a hit of cream, plops the can on the upstage work-table, and runs out the stage left door.)*

JIMMIE WYVETTE. *(Calls after her.)* Hurry back, we've got a lot to do! *(Then, to Peaches.)* We've got to up our game. Let's hustle into that storeroom, see what else we have to work with. *(Hurries out the upstage door.)*

PEACHES. *(Calling after Jimmie Wyvette.)* Since we have no choice, I guess I'm in! *(Starts for the upstage door.)* Besides, it's not like I have a date to the reunion to distract me. So, let's stay focused — all business, no men! *(Dewey Davenport, good-looking, nice guy with a*